

The Rise of Fascism in India Threatens its Minorities & its Survival

by Dr Muhammad Gumnāmi

This article is about Indian Muslims, who form one of the largest Muslim population-blocs in the world (estimates range from 140-190 million). They also form the largest minority in India (10-14%), and they and other smaller minorities like the Christians, are threatened today by the rise of militant Hindutva ('Hindu nationalism'). The article will explain the Nazi inspired roots of 'Hindu nationalism', its transition into the mainstream from the 1990s, and how its persecution of minorities is creating the conditions for the break-up of India.

The Republic of India was formed in 1947, following an unfortunate partition of the sub-continent into multi-denominational, secular-democratic India and an Islamic Pakistan. It was unfortunate because it led to heavy bloodshed and the forced migration and death of millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Neither India nor Pakistan have recovered fully from it, and Indian Muslims are trapped by the shadows of partition, which now seem to be extending. Between 1947 and 1990, low intensity firestorms of violence erupted sporadically against Muslims in India, but it was generally not planned by the government. However, from the 1990s, organised pogroms and attempts to delegitimise the citizenship of Indian Muslims have been coordinated by a major party in power, which has fascist notions of citizenship derived directly from Nazi Germany.

WHAT CAUSED THE BLOODY PARTITION OF INDIA IN 1947?

The blame lies with the British, Hindus and Muslims. The British encouraged separate electorates, a bit like in South Africa, so that Hindus and Muslims would not unite as Indians against them. Before the British, the Muslim minority had ruled India for about 800 years, from about 1100 to 1857. Islam came to South India (in the state of Kerala) through trade with the Arabs and in the North through conquest by Afghan and central Asian Turks. Eventually, the conquerors settled, and made India their home. Some Muslim rulers even intermarried with the Hindus, and what is called 'Muslim rule' was a Mughal-Hindu Rajput alliance, built partly through matrimony. The bulk of the common Muslims were not of Afghan and central Asian Turk stock, but were Hindus who had converted. Although there was some fighting between

Muslim and Hindu rulers, it was often opportunist as was the custom of the times. Before Islam, Hindu rulers frequently fought each other and after 'Muslim rule', there are many examples of rulers of Muslim kingdoms in India fighting one another. The British encouraged the simplification of local history such that Hindus came to believe that Muslims who ruled were totally alien to the land. At the same time, as the movement for Indian independence started with the Indian National Congress in 1885, and the British saw it was led by Hindus, they encouraged the feeling in Muslims that if the British left, the Hindus would persecute them.

From 1925, some Hindus set up militant and fascist organisations like the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Mahasabha, who were very directly inspired by Hitler's model for minorities. They conceived of an India where Muslims and Christians would be non-citizens. The Muslims at that time were 35% of the population. Although the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha were not mainstream, and India's great leaders of the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, and the Indian National Congress party, eschewed a Hindu state, both on grounds of principle and practicality, the threats issued by these fringe groups against Muslims could not be totally ignored. The Muslim League which had been set up originally only to safeguard Muslim representation, finally pushed for a separate state, due to the Hitlerian models advocated by the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. The Hitlerian solutions for minorities can be found in the writings of M.S. Golwalkar and V.D. Savarkar, the key leaders of these two Hindu groups. Their writings are freely available on the internet. In fact, Savarkar coined 'The Two Nation Theory' stating Hindus and Muslims of India were two incompatible 'nations'. Eventually, the Muslim League also adopted this theory. For these Hindu groups, this theory meant one territorial nation for Hindus, and the Muslim minority in concentration camps. For the Muslim League, it meant creation of a separate state for Muslims.

Prominent Hindu historians such as R C Majumdar and A K Majumdar confirm, '... one factor was responsible to a very large extent for the emergence of the idea of Partition of India on communal lines, this was the Hindu Mahasabha...' (*Struggle for Freedom*, 1969, page 611). The Congress too had a few but



Jawaharlal Nehru (left) and Mahatma Gandhi in discussion at the All-India Congress, Bombay, July, 1946

prominent people like Sardar Patel, Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai, who spoke of India exclusively as a Hindu nation, and this alienated many Muslims from joining Congress. When a minority is 35%, it is unwise to exclude it. Eventually, the communal passions and riots instigated by both Hindu and Muslim groups finally persuaded the British that partition was the only solution. The British and indeed the Congress acceded to the Muslim League's demand for a separate state that is Pakistan.

The Indian Muslims however were divided: one set definitely wanted partition and Pakistan, and this group was led by Mohamed Ali Jinnah, and another set called the Nationalist Muslims was led by Maulana Azad. Azad was among the top four leaders of the Congress and he did not want India partitioned, presciently saying that it would not solve the communal problem, and it would merely lead to a system of hostages – the Muslim minority would be a hostage in Hindu majority India, and the Hindu minority

would be hostage in a Muslim majority Pakistan. However, his view did not prevail, and India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947. As partition involved bloody migrations of Muslims from India to Pakistan, and the Hindus and Sikhs to India, the trauma has stayed embedded in northern India and Pakistan, even to this day, 73 years afterwards.

To put the matter in perspective, the savagery at the time of India's partition, with its ethnic cleansing, religious and racial intolerance, and identity politics was not peculiar to India, or to Muslims and Hindus. Although, there is the effort today in India to portray Muslims as uniquely recalcitrant, then and now, as if that was the cause of partition, the problem of entwined ethnic groups which do not accept each other, exists in many places. For example, at the same time as India's partition, in the period 1933-1945, similar butchery was conducted in Europe with the rise of German Nazism, and concepts of racial supremacy. German ultra-nationalism excluded

Jews and 6 million were exterminated. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union under the belief that the Russians and Slavs were inferior races, leading to the death of 20 million Soviets. After the Soviet Union, Britain and the US defeated Hitler in 1945, Germany was shattered and divided into two countries. Germany also lost its Prussian territories in a sort of reverse ethnic cleansing. Germans living with other communities in eastern pockets (like Prussia, Pomerania, Sudetenland, Silesia and Königsberg), were attacked and killed, and survivors were asked to leave and re-locate in mainland Germany, while these areas became part of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This was decided by the three victorious allies and Germany having waged war, had no choice but to comply. These were all Christian countries but identity politics in areas with mixed populations led to war, massive deaths and migration of people. Thus, the re-drawing of borders as happened in the Indian sub-continent is nothing new, and it has happened elsewhere, and the fault cannot be solely laid at Muslim intransigence in India. Europe has recovered and moved on as in 1990, Germany signed 'The Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany' with the Soviet Union, the US, France and the UK, stating that it would accept the new borders and give up all claims on the Prussian territories it lost, in exchange of re-unification of the two Germanies. The ceded territories became part of Poland and the Soviet Union. Oddly, the creation of the EU and Polish membership has allowed Germans to live, if they want, in the Prussian territories they lost. Such a move to settle borders and create a confederation of states with free movement has not occurred between India and Pakistan even after 73 years; Kashmir is claimed by both countries, and is the cause for the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan, and Hindus and Muslims in India.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE, CREATION OF PAKISTAN, AND ASSASSINATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI BY THE RSS

Mahatma Gandhi who had initiated a non-violent struggle for Indian independence was assassinated in 1948 by a Hindu fanatic who had been a member of the RSS. The RSS believed that the Hindu majority's mob violence could have settled matters more favourably for Hindus, had not Gandhi checked the Hindus using his spiritual appeal for non-violence. In their eyes, Gandhi 'appeased the Muslims' at the expense of the Hindus. The RSS was banned in 1948 as

a result of their role in Gandhi's murder and Indians accepted that at the time.

Despite the loss of Gandhi, India however recovered due to the great leadership of Pandit Nehru. Nehru rejected historical revanchism and he guided the Hindu public away from the desire to take revenge against Muslims left in India. He believed that India needed to catch up in science, technology and modern governance, and should not revert to mediaeval blood feuds. Fortunately for India, Nehru lived on for 17 years after independence and he laid the foundations of a modern, secular, democratic state. Amongst his achievements was the integration of Indian Muslims and winning their commitment and loyalty to the new state. Unfortunately for Pakistan, Jinnah died soon after its founding, and the country drifted into the hands of a military dictatorship soon after.

India's recovery was slow. Among developing countries, it was remarkable in managing a very linguistically and religiously diverse country through secular-democratic institutions. This was achieved in the Nehruvian era. India's economic progress was relatively slow. Nehru could not rely on the West after the experience of western colonialism, and therefore India decided to chart a non-aligned course. India made strides in nuclear technology, steel and food production, and it even built the capacity to launch satellites. The Muslims also made huge contributions in Nehru's India. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a rocket engineer, who was a by-product of the merit-based system that Nehru brought, became the project director who put India's first satellite into a geo-stationary orbit. Dr. Kalam had been groomed and trained by scientists like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Satish Dhawan. In that period, being a Muslim was not a bar to attainment and holding high posts. Indian Muslims were also unique in having access to an English-based education from the 1900s. They had the first 'Muslim university' that taught in English, namely the Aligarh Muslim University. At the same time, the Indian Muslims were used to working with other communities like Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, and hence they were the least isolationist and most accommodative amongst the Muslims of the world. By and large, Indian Muslims have been moderate, and ex-President Bush noted that although India had the second largest Muslim population of any country, not a single Indian Muslim was found fighting for the Taliban. Generally, they have not been involved in terrorist attacks in western countries, which is another unfortunate fall out of the Gulf war.

DECLINE OF SECULAR DEMOCRACY IN INDIA AFTER 1990, AND THE EMERGENCE OF HINDUTVA

By the 1990s, the scene began to change for the worse in India, with the rise of 'Hindutva', a term coined originally in the 1920s by the Hitler admirer, Savarkar. The western press uses a more understood term, 'Hindu nationalism', for Hindutva. Indian critics sometime use the term 'majoritarianism' to describe the Hindutva mind set – that is, 'the Hindus should only have rights as they own the nation, and this is justified because they form the majority'. Perhaps Nehru was more to the point when he defined Hindutva as 'fascism, Hindu style'.

After lying dormant for 40 years, from the mid-1980s, Hindutva was re-awakened and led by L.K. Advani. Advani was a refugee politician, an RSS member, originally from Karachi (now in Pakistan). The RSS, which had been sidelined after their role in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi, began to sense the possibility of reviving their dream of a Hindu supremacist nation run along Hitler's model. The RSS had by then created a political front, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which stood in elections. In 1992, Advani, the leader of the BJP, organised Hindu mobs

to raze the Babari masjid (constructed by the Muslim emperor, Babar, around 1530 AD), claiming the mosque had been built after razing a Hindu temple which marked the spot where the Hindu god Rama was born. The claim that Babar razed a mosque was not substantiated, and nor did it require proof for much of the Hindu public. This led to riots and violence against Muslims. It must be noted that a Congress government was ruling the country at that time, but the then PM Narasimha Rao, did not have the spine to confront Hindu mob rule, fearing it would increase support for Advani. Rao had been a RSS member in the 1930s (although he was in Congress), so it was held by some that he connived with the RSS-BJP and allowed the felling of the mosque. The triumphalism and feeling of victory over the Muslims following the demolition of the Babari masjid led to the BJP slowly clawing its way from 2 seats in parliament to eventually forming a coalition government (and later a majority government). The Hindus were led to believe the destruction of the mosque was a rightful reclamation.

The pattern for getting power was set from the Babari masjid demolition: the BJP could get electoral support by playing an anti-Muslim card, portraying Muslims as anti-nationals who had despoiled Hindu

Narendra Modi paying homage to Vinayak Savarkar, one of the founders of Hindutva philosophy



glory during 800 years of Muslim rule. Advani also undermined the Indian state by making Hindus feel secularism was at their expense and somehow it had 'pampered Muslims'. The Congress was backed into a corner and did not take a strong stand against Advani, not prosecuting for mob violence. The 1990s were India's equivalent to the Weimar Republic phase of Germany (in the period 1920-1933). These were the years before Hitler achieved a majority after running a campaign of hate, violence and intimidation, with a divided and weak opposition. Similarly, the Indian state and opposition in the 1990s had started to wither, and was not strong enough to defend constitutional norms, and law-and-order, and this allowed the fascists to grow in the coming years.

THE HINDUTVA LED COALITION GOVERNMENT OF VAJPAYEE (1998-2004)

From the 1990s onwards, the slow poisoning of Hindu minds against Indian Muslims was carried out by the RSS and BJP. However, their progress to a majority with complete control did not occur immediately. The BJP passed through a stage where they had to form a coalition government under the 'moderate' Vajpayee who was also an RSS member. The Vajpayee coalition government ran between 1998 and 2004, and while it was BJP led, it did not have the majority to lay the foundations of a Hindu Hitlerian state.

However, the trend for persecution of Muslims and Christians was already apparent. A militant Hindu group called Bajrang Dal burnt alive an Australian missionary and his son. The Christians were accused

of 'forcible conversions'. The 'moderate' PM Vajpayee did not comment, while his hard-line Home Minister Advani gave a blank slate to Bajrang Dal, declaring it was not a criminal organisation. This trend has continued: the BJP gets affiliated Hindu extremist groups to attack minorities, and then says it had nothing to do with it. Afterwards, it shields the attackers.

During the Vajpayee period, the BJP-dominated state of Gujarat had a state election in 2002, in which Narendra Modi was running for re-election as the Chief Minister. The opinion polls predicted a defeat for Modi. Then, Modi, the RSS, and the other militant Hindu groups, worked together to engineer a major Hindu-Muslim riot in 2002 in Gujarat, in which Muslims were blamed for burning a train (without any proof), and then Hindu mobs were allowed and encouraged to run amok and carry out a pogrom in which 2,000 Muslims were killed. It was reminiscent of Hitler's Reich Kristallenacht in which Jewish shops and habitations were burnt by mobs aided by fascist paramilitary groups, while the police looked on. The pretext for the attacks was the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris, by a 17-year-old Polish Jew. Gujarat 2002 was the same model. Vajpayee, the PM, turned a blind eye and shielded Modi. As a result of the polarisation from the pogrom, the Hindus voted for Modi to be re-elected in 2002 as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Clearly, attacking minorities bought Hindu votes to the BJP. At the time, the RSS ominously warned that 'Gujarat was the laboratory of Hindutva' and it (the pogrom against Muslims) would be repeated elsewhere.

The return of Congress in 2004-2014, the period of high economic growth, leading to the notion that

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an Indian right-wing, Hindu nationalist, paramilitary volunteer organisation.



India was emerging as another economic superpower.

In 2004, the Vajpayee government lost the national election, and this led to the return of a Congress-led government with Dr Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister. He had two terms as PM, from 2004-2014, and this period was the golden age of the Indian economy. Under Dr. Singh, India's economy grew at 8-10%. Under him, India even weathered the 2008 global crisis, and a prosperous middle class of 300-400 million was created. The western press even wrote that India was a challenger to China, a new Asian tiger. Singh's politics were not divisive, and they focussed on economic growth and enablement. The Hindu-Muslim clashes receded into the background, and even Muslims felt the BJP persecution of the preceding years was an aberration. However, despite the economic growth achieved, there were charges of corruption, not against Singh, but members of his government, and the BJP started playing a combination of anti-corruption and anti-Muslim plank, to win the Hindus.

With Vajpayee gone, and Advani side-lined, the RSS and BJP called on Modi, the Hindu hardliner and organiser of the pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat, to lead their campaign in the general election of 2014. Now, Modi talked only about economic development in the campaign, but his reputation as a 'Hindu nationalist' who stands up to Muslims, had already been cemented in 2002 by the pogrom he organised in Gujarat. His reputation as a Hindu strongman led to a landslide victory for the BJP in the 2014 national election. It had a majority at last—to implement the RSS vision of a Hindu supremacist state, whose main ethos was driven by economic and political destruction of Muslims in India.

THE RETURN OF THE BJP IN 2014 WITH A MAJORITY, AND THE START OF BLATANT PERSECUTION OF MINORITIES

After the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, Modi had a visa ban imposed on him by the EU and the US. However, as soon as Modi became PM in 2014, the western countries had to remove the travel ban as he was an elected head of state. Even Obama feted Modi. While Modi as PM reduced direct anti-Muslim rhetoric, he outsourced that to the BJP and RSS cadre. Modi's first term (2014-2019) saw a spate of attacks on Muslims and Christians – there was a *ghar wapsie* programme (reconversion to Hinduism). Muslims were attacked allegedly for cow slaughter (the cow is a holy animal for Hindus in northern India). Vigilantes lynched Muslims over cows, and grisly video clips of the murders were circulated on WhatsApp. An 8 year old Kashmiri Muslim girl, Asifa Bano, was gang-raped by a Hindu priest, his son, nephew and police, in a temple, and then murdered. Afterwards, the BJP and RSS Hindus marched to support freedom for the rapists. Christians were also attacked and their churches vandalised.

Modi managed to allow his cadres freedom to do all this, but he followed a foreign tour programme to western countries, Arab countries, and to the Far East. The western countries still held to the hope that Modi when in power would become moderate. The image of India with a galloping economy and market with purchasing power, still reined. Some Gulf States even awarded Modi their highest awards – it seems they had not caught on yet to Modi's anti-Muslim programmes at home.



Modi however did two things that crippled the Indian economy: a demonetisation of the Indian currency that led to destruction of the informal sector of the economy, and a Goods and Services Tax which was complicated and poorly implemented. Despite crashing the Indian economy, so assiduously built by Dr. Singh in the preceding years, Modi's support amongst Hindus did not dwindle; the 'Hindu strongman' image carried all.

THE BJP WITH MODI RETURNS IN 2019 WITH A BIGGER MAJORITY, AND ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION TO CREATE A HINDU STATE AND DISENFRANCHISE THE MUSLIMS

Despite the economic failures of his first term, Modi won a second term in 2019 – with an even bigger majority. This was partly due to a short cross-border confrontation with Pakistan which mysteriously occurred just before the 2019 general election. The cross-border air strike against alleged terror camps was accepted by the Hindu majority as successful (although it was disbelieved internationally), and it reinforced Modi's image of a strong Hindu who stands up to Muslims.

In Modi's second term, armed with an even larger majority in 2019, matters took a very serious turn for Indian Muslims. A plan for a Hitler-style reduction of the Muslim citizens was unveiled. It started due to a perceived problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration to Assam in the north east of India, which was allegedly changing the Hindu-Muslim population ratio. The government brought a National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam to decide between bona fide citizens and illegals. The documentation asked to prove citizenship were birth certificates, and parent's birth certificates. Detention centres or concentration camps started to be built in Assam for those without the citizenship document. Once sent to the concentration camp, the inmate would have no recourse to justice or law as the person was stateless.

The problem for many rural people of past generations was that there were no birth certificates. When the NRC was completed for Assam, the result was embarrassing: more Hindus than Muslims were deemed illegals due to lack of the required documents of citizenship. The plan had been to extend the NRC to the whole of India, but seeing that more Hindus than Muslims would be deemed stateless, the government sought a way out.

In 2019, the Modi government created a Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which claimed it was providing humanitarian refuge to persecuted minorities from three Muslim countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. This allowed Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Christian refugees from these three countries to apply for citizenship – but it expressly denied Muslims. Citizenship based on selective exclusion was reminiscent of the Nazi Germany's Nuremberg Race Laws. However, the purpose was not really a concern for persecuted minorities in the three Muslim countries. The purpose was eventually to link the CAA with the NRC. The CAA provided a loophole for Hindus left out of the NRC due to lack of documents (birth certificates), to obtain citizenship by claiming they were persecuted refugees from the neighbouring countries. That option would be denied for bona fide Muslim citizens who could not provide the certificates for citizenship. The combined CAA-NRC would then act to send Muslims selectively to concentration camps, and from thereon, it would be a step to a Hitlerian style genocide, that the RSS has always wanted.

STUDENT AND WOMEN'S PROTESTS AGAINST THE PLAN TO DISENFRANCHISE MUSLIMS WITH THE CAA-NRC

Realising the existential danger from the CAA-NRC plan, in 2019, students from Indian universities and women launched an all-India protest movement. It was a non-cooperation movement in the Gandhian style. Although initiated by Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians joined the protest marches and sit-ins. The movement had the potential to reclaim India's pluralist ethos of the days of Nehru and Gandhi, from the clutches of fascism. There was a deadlock for several months and in its frustration with the sit-ins in Delhi, the BJP government and the RSS organised a riot and pogrom against Muslims in Delhi in Feb. 2020 – paradoxically when it was hosting Trump in Delhi. The Delhi pogrom was done to intimidate the Muslims over the CAA-NRC protests.

The matter was heading for a prolonged civil confrontation with possibility of major government violence against citizens. The BJP had full control of the police and the paramilitary RSS could raise Hindu mobs to beat up Muslims. Ironically, what saved India was the outbreak of Covid-19. This caused the anti-CAA/NRC sit-ins to disperse and the government was also forced to divert its attention toward

Covid-19 and its economic fallout.

THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 IN FEB. 2020, AND USING COVID-19 AS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK MUSLIMS

Instead of planning to tackle Covid-19, the hate spewed out against Muslims by the BJP government's officials and their media, continued with redoubled vengeance in new ways. The spread of Covid-19 was blamed on a Muslim Tablighi conference. Some Indian TV channels said Muslims were engaged in a 'corona jihad'. Muslims became targets for attacks and some were denied treatment in hospitals in northern India. These messages were also spread by WhatsApp and Twitter. Some Hindus in Gulf countries like the UAE and Kuwait, influenced by the constant brainwashing of Hindu extremist groups, also started sending hate messages against Muslims and Arabs, accusing them of engaging in a 'corona jihad' against Hindus. This caught the attention of the UAE's Princess Hind Al Qassemi, who ironically was an Indophile, an admirer of Gandhi, and someone who appreciated Hindu culture. She initiated steps to deport those engaged in using social media to send hate messages. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also

followed suit. This incident brought to the attention of Arab countries and their media that India had changed and was not what they had imagined, and a militant Hindu culture had taken over, which sustained itself on a virulent platform that vilified Muslims and Arabs.

The poor handling of Covid-19, and the economy (which Modi had already shattered in his first term), led India into a free fall. Gone was the period of growth of Dr Singh's days. The outside world is slowly realising that India is not an emerging tiger, or an investment destination. India has been consumed by the fires lit by fascism.

On top of this, Modi's India received another blow when China entered India and took some land. This too had occurred in Modi's second term when Hindu nationalism got carried away and repealed Article 370 of the Indian constitution, by which Muslim-majority Kashmir had been given a special status, in lieu of its accession to India in 1947. The plan was to allow non-Kashmiris to settle in Kashmir and change its demographic status, in the Israeli style. One of Modi's hard-line ministers, Amit Shah, also issued a declaration that India would forcibly take back land he felt belonged to India, but was in Pakistani and Chinese hands. This led to China launching a border skirmish in which India lost land.

Protests against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)



Thus, due to Covid-19, China, and the parlous state of the economy, the BJP government has not been able to concentrate of late on its plan to disenfranchise Muslims politically and economically. But this is a temporary lull, necessitated by circumstances. The RSS is a state within the state, and the BJP is run according to its precepts of a Hindu nation. That is, a society run on the Hindu caste system, and a Nazi-derived model of citizenship. India is held back by its twin problems: Hindu caste system and Hindu communalism (sectarianism).

NOT ONLY SURVIVAL OF MUSLIMS AND MINORITIES IS AT STAKE, INDIA'S SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE

How matters pan out for India remains to be seen. Fascism has failed everywhere and India will be no exception. In the case of Nazi Germany, it waged war on Europe and had to be destroyed and reconstructed by Britain, the US and the Soviet Union. Germany recovered due to the reconstruction of society through the elimination of propaganda and propagation of hate in schools, the judiciary, police and all organs of the state. In the case of Yugoslavia, when Serb fascism took grip, the country broke into seven countries. To cite Asian examples, the RSS-BJP combination in India would like to imitate for Indian Muslims, Myanmar's expulsion of Rohingyas, or imitate China's policies with Uyghurs (stamp out Uyghur culture through violence and settling Han Chinese in Xinjiang). Imitating China's model against the Uyghurs will also not work in India. India will lose its democracy and not attain the economic and military power of the Chinese.

Unless Indians get a grip on fascism, the outcome will be like Yugoslavia. It is possible that Indians will eventually launch a civil disobedience movement in the Gandhian style to contest the RSS-BJP's fascism. India surprised the world with that approach when it demanded independence from Britain. Indians will have to do the same and demand a ban on the RSS. The hopeful side is that unlike the Chinese, the Indian intelligentsia have experience of secular democracy and liberal values, and they will get organised in India and abroad to contest fascism.

It will be wiser if Hindus realised that Indian Muslims are an asset for them, and can be used to help bring a final settlement between India and Pakistan. Indians should be seeking inspiration from their own historical personages, like the Mughal Emperor Akbar, who managed to rule successfully because he

understood that to govern India, its two largest communities, Hindus and Muslims, have to be carried along. Following the RSS's Hitler model can only result in the same outcome for India as Germany's destruction. India's best course of action is to negotiate a settlement with Pakistan and Kashmiris, and work towards the creation of a European Union style confederation in South Asia, with free movement of people.

WHAT SHOULD OTHER COUNTRIES DO ABOUT THE ONWARD MARCH OF FASCISM IN INDIA AND THE PLANNED GENOCIDE OF INDIAN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS?

The Indian Muslim minority is not like the Rohingya and the Uyghurs and it would be foolhardy for the rest of the world to look the other way. Other countries need to realise it is financially risky (as well as morally unworthy) to invest in India under the RSS-BJP. They need to study the RSS literature written by its founders like M.S. Golwalkar and see their admiration for Hitler's model for minorities. Western countries in particular should be able to see where fascism will lead India. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Walter Lindener, the German ambassador to India, visited the RSS quarters to understand more about the RSS. It was shocking that the ambassador of the country that spread misery to Europe with Nazism, sought understanding of a Hindu group which wants to run India according to Hitler's model. Perhaps this reflects the rise of neo-Nazism

Trump and Modi embrace



in Germany. It is a cruel irony that Germans want to learn about Nazism now from a Hindu group of the 1920s. Likewise, the US Consul General in Mumbai, David J. Rank, attended a ceremony in Feb. 2020 to honour the RSS's founder, Hegdewar. The US was the country that fought to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany.

Western countries should realise if concentration camps are used in India, there will be protests and eventually civil war, and it will lead to refugees and even confrontations between Indians and Pakistan-

is settled in western countries, where they are both present in large numbers. Western countries will not be immunised against these problems, the problems of India and Pakistan will spill into the West.

Gulf and Arab countries also need to realise that the RSS has been collecting funds in their countries to persecute Muslims in India. Instead of rewarding Modi with awards, they should be aware that the fall-out of this persecution will affect their countries and so they must reject the proponents of fascism in India today.

Due to the exceptional security threats in India currently, where students have been imprisoned, journalists killed, citizenship and visas revoked, the author has asked for his real name to be undisclosed in the publication.
